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TEXT OF TELEGRAM 83PARIS 028094

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 4)

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: PTER, FR, TU

SUBJECT: FRENCH DENY NEW INITIATIVE ON ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

1. RESPONDING IN PART TO A MISLEADING PRESS HEADLINE, THE QUAI ON JULY 28 DENIED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN ANY NEW INITIATIVES ON THE ISSUE OF RECOGNIZING THE ARMENIAN "GENOCIDE" AS A RESULT OF RECENT BOMBINGS, BUT CONFIRMED THAT THIS HAS BEEN FRANCE'S LONG-STANDING POSITION.

2. FRONT PAGE OF JULY 28-29 LE MONDE CARRIED THE PROMINENT HEADLINE, "FRANCE SEEKS RECOGNITION OF THE 1915 ARMENIAN GENOCIDE: IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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DEVELOPMENT OF TERRORISM FOLLOWING THE ORLY AND LISBON BOMBINGS, PARIS SEEKS TO BRING TO AN END INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSIONS THAT HAVE BEEN GOING ON FOR TWELVE YEARS." ARTICLE ITSELF WAS A FACTUAL ACCOUNT OF FRANCE'S SUPPORT FOR USE OF THE TERM "GENOCIDE" TO CHARACTERIZE THE ARMENIAN MASSACRES OF 1915. NOTING IRONY THAT FRANCE SHOULD BE THE SITE OF THE BOMBINGS WHEN, "AMONG WESTERN NATIONS", IT HAD BEEN THE "SUREST AND MOST CONSTANT ALLY OF THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY," ARTICLE RECALLED THAT

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REVIEWED BY RL DATE 8/7/87

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REVIEWED BY J. E. Galt DATE 1/18/85

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FRANCE HAD SUPPORTED USE OF THE TERM "GENOCIDE" EVEN BEFORE MAY 1981, BUT HAD DONE SO WITH PARTICULAR VIGOR UNDER THE SOCIALISTS. SINCE MAY 1981, THE FRENCH HAVE CONSISTENTLY USED THE TERM IN OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS AND SUPPORTED ITS USE IN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. CITING PARTICULARLY THE REPORT PREPARED BY THE UN SUBCOMMISSION ON DISCRIMINATORY MEASURES AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES, ARTICLE NOTED THAT THE TERM "GENOCIDE" HAD BEEN DROPPED AT THE REQUEST OF TURKISH AUTHORITIES, THAT FRENCH SINCE 1981 HAD SOUGHT TO HAVE IT REINSTATED, AND WOULD AGAIN RAISE IT AT THE FORTHCOMING MEETING OF THE SUBCOMMISSION AUGUST 15 - SEPTEMBER 9. ARTICLE FINALLY NOTES THAT FRENCH POSITION IN NO WAY BLAMES PRESENT TURKISH GOVERNMENT: "PRESENT-DAY TURKEY CAN IN NO WAY BE CONSIDERED RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE."

3. QUAI STATEMENT EMPHASIZED THAT NO NEW INITIATIVE HAD BEEN UNDERTAKEN IN RESPONSE TO RECENT BOMBINGS. IT CONFIRMED THAT THE FRENCH DELEGATE TO THE UNHCR AND TO THE SUBCOMMISSION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION FOR MINORITIES HAD SUPPORTED AN "UPDATING" OF THE REPORT IN QUESTION, BUT STRESSED THAT THESE POSITIONS PREDATED RECENT EVENTS. IT FURTHER RECALLED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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CHEYSSON'S RESPONSE TO A PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION OF JULY 11, WHICH EXPRESSED REGRET AT THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE THE MASSACRES AS GENOCIDE, WHILE NOT HOLDING IT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

4. COMMENT. THE ARMENIAN BOMBINGS, COMBINED WITH THE MID-SUMMER DEARTH OF OTHER NEWS, GAVE THIS ISSUE A PROMINENCE WE DOUBT IT OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE HAD, THOUGH IT IS CLEARLY ONE MORE IRRITANT IN TURKEY'S PRESENT STRAINED RELATIONS WITH FRANCE. THE SOCIALISTS' PURSUIT OF THE GENOCIDE ISSUE IS CONSISTENT WITH THEIR EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT CAN ALSO BE ACCOUNTED FOR BY THE PRESENCE IN INTERIOR MINISTER DEFFERRE'S BAILIWICK OF MARSEILLE OF SOME 100,000 ARMENIANS. THERE ARE ANOTHER 200,000 ARMENIANS IN FRANCE, MANY OF WHOM ARE WELL ESTABLISHED IN BUSINESS AND WITH NOT-INSIGNIFICANT POLITICAL CLOUDS. MARESCA

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